



Rejoice always, pray without ceasing,
in everything give thanks;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NKJV



An eye-opening vision trip

Dear friends and family,

So much has happened since our last update; so, we will try to catch you up as best we can without overloading you with details.

First of all, as we mentioned last time, we were able to make a vision trip as a family to a people group in the Amazon last month! Needless to say, this trip (where we flew 2 hours in a small plane to the middle of the jungle) was very helpful for us to see up-close the needs of a people group here in Brazil as well as meet the missionaries who work with them. In our case, the "X" people group, as we're calling them, have had missionaries for decades and already have a church building and many other advances that many people groups here do not have. To be honest, this reality had us wondering if it would be the place for us to work or not, as our focus up to this point has been the unreached/least-reached people groups that still have no missionaries. However, the more we have looked into the X people as an option, the more we see not only the existing need, but also the amazing potential. As far as the need goes, while they do have many of the outward forms of Christianity, our X brothers and sisters generally have a surface-level understanding of the faith at best and are seriously lacking deeper teaching and discipleship, even among the pastors. Also, out of the current team that works with them (a family and two single missionary ladies), only one of the single ladies is currently living in the community for various reasons. This leaves a large gap in the area of teaching and discipleship that needs to be filled, and it is unclear if/when the whole team can be back in. (Continued below)



...On the other hand, this tribal church plant obviously has a lot of work already done, which means there are some unique advantages. Our X friends are already eager to be used by the Lord to share what they know about the gospel with those around them in their neighboring communities, but they lack the experience, discipleship, and resources to be able to do that well. The team believes that once they receive these, our precious tribal brothers and sisters could be invaluable workers to advance God's kingdom.

All that being said, we are excited to announce that we have officially given our acceptance to our field leadership to join the church planting team with the X people group! We are eager to pursue the next steps of finishing Portuguese study, visiting the states, moving to Manaus, and then building a house in our new ministry location sometime in mid-2025! Praise God with us!



A Difficult Turn of Events

During our vision trip to the Amazon, we got a difficult call saying that our language teacher and the coordinator for our language program, Ana, had passed away unexpectedly from a heart attack. Needless to say, our world felt as if it had been turned upside by this news. Our hearts are still broken over the loss of our dear friend, but at the same time we are resting in the Lord's timing and rejoice as we know she is with the Lord and at peace. She has run her race for Him, and now it is our turn to continue running the race marked out for us. This sudden loss left the staff, students, and especially the Portuguese students, reeling. Due to Ana's sudden passing, Joanna and the other families here learning language and culture were left without a coordinator and grammar teacher. Finding someone to replace her became an urgent prayer request.

An Unexpected Turn of Events

Before we'd even returned from our trip, Spencer, due to his love of grammar (in English and Portuguese), was asked to help teach grammar to the American students in the program on a temporary basis, just until new teachers could be found. So, at the end of August, Spencer accepted this position, based on the stipulation that we get some help with the kids so that Joanna can continue her studies. Thankfully, a fellow student had already offered to help watch our kids during class times. This has been a huge help. We are praising the Lord that, since classes started, a new couple has been found that is willing to coordinate the program and teach classes starting next year. Thus, Spencer will continue teaching until the end of the semester (Dec. 13), and then fully pass off the responsibilities to others.

(Continued below)

...Spencer has enjoyed teaching classes and is learning a lot in the process, but we knew that it would affect Joanna's ability to fully devote herself to Portuguese and culture study. We are realizing it may be difficult for her to be released from the program in December as was our goal. However, we have decided to move forward with our plans to visit the states next year regardless of whether Joanna has finished or not. We have already bought our tickets for Florida at the beginning of January! We plan to stay in the states until April or so, at which point we will move to Manaus in preparation for our next move. We will keep you all posted about our itinerary, but please let us know now if you would like to try to get together with us while we're in the country!



Praises & Prayer Requests

Praises:

- For our successful family vision trip and for wisdom in the decision to work with the X people group!
- Abby has made new friends and developed other friendships despite having to say goodbye to her two best friends.
- Despite the sudden loss of our teacher, God has provided a new couple to coordinate and teach in her place.

Prayer Requests:

- For Joanna to be able to get her Portuguese hours and still finish by December if possible.
- Wisdom as we adjust to our new routine/balance our responsibilities this semester.
- For the students in the Portuguese/culture program to continue to learn well despite the difficult circumstances of this semester.
- Our visa process – that we'd be able to get permanent residency this year if possible.

Thank you so much for keeping up with us and for your prayers and support! Please reply to this email and let us know how you are doing and how we can pray for you, as well!

All for His glory,
Spencer & Joanna
Abigail, Gabriella, and Judah
1 Thess. 5:16-18



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